

# SLOVAKIA

## UKRAINIAN NATIONALS CROSSING BACK TO UKRAINE



APRIL - JUNE 2024  
COUNTRY ANALYSIS



**IOM**  
UN MIGRATION

GLOBAL DATA INSTITUTE  
DISPLACEMENT  
TRACKING MATRIX

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**Cover photo:** A DTM enumerator surveys individuals crossing back to Ukraine at the bus station in Bratislava, Slovakia. © IOM 2024

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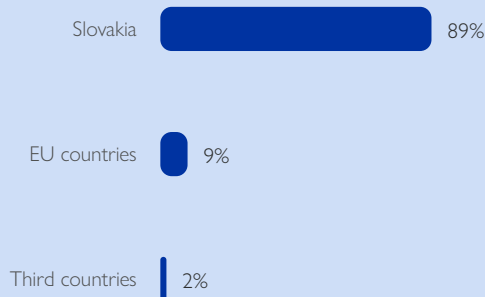
# KEY FINDINGS

## DEMOGRAPHICS

1,467  
Ukrainian respondents



## COUNTRIES OF STAY



## TOP 5 NEEDS



Information  
42%



37%  
Access health care



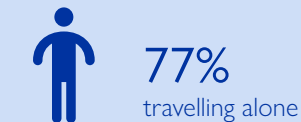
28%  
Medication



13%  
Accommodation

Multiple answers possible

## GROUP COMPOSITION

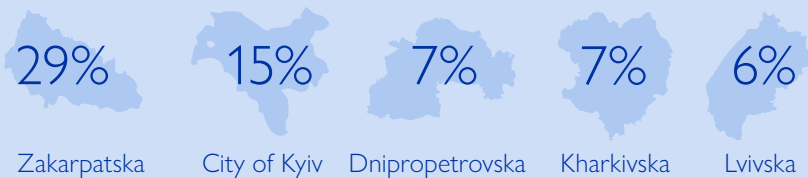


## TRAVELING TO

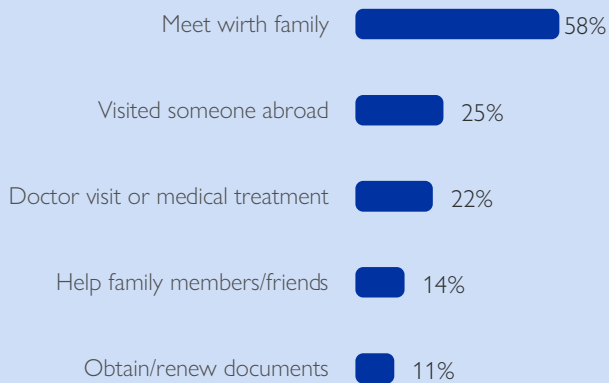
85%  
Region of origin

15%  
Different region

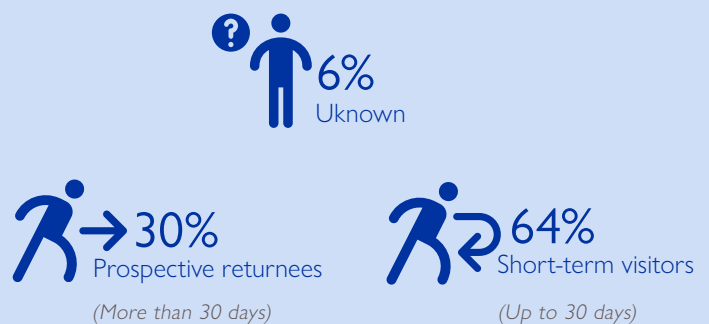
## TOP 5 DESTINATION OBLASTS



## TOP REASONS TO CROSS BACK



## LENGTH OF STAY



Multiple answers possible

## OVERVIEW

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) collected data on Ukrainian nationals and Third-Country Nationals (TCNs) who crossed back to Ukraine from or through Slovakia, either for a temporary stay or permanent return after a period of displacement abroad. The survey focuses on the return intentions, duration of displacement, destinations, assistance, and experiences of discrimination of respondents.

For analytical purposes, individuals planning to spend 0 to 30 days in Ukraine are categorized as "short-term visitors," while those intending to stay longer than one month are identified

as "prospective returnees." A total of 1,471 surveys were collected between April and June 2024. More than half of the data (821 surveys) was collected at the Bratislava bus station, while the other 44 per cent, was collected at the Kosice bus and train stations. Among all interviews, less than one per cent (n=4) were completed by TCNs, while the vast majority, comprising over 99 per cent (n=1,467), were completed by Ukrainian nationals. The analysis presented in this report is based on the responses provided by Ukrainian nationals (n=1,467).



IOM provides assistance and conducts a short survey with people fleeing war in Ukraine in Senec, Slovakia. © IOM 2024

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

### GENDER AND AGE

Out of the 1,467 survey participants who were interviewed prior to crossing back from Slovakia, 94 per cent were women, and six per cent were men. While 55 per cent of men were in the 60+ age category, only 10 per cent of women were in the same category. Only six per cent of men were in the age range of 18 – 29, compared to 22 per cent of female respondents. The age groups with the highest proportions of female “prospective returnees” were those aged 40 – 49 (29%), followed by the 30 – 39 age category (21%). Conversely, a significant majority of men planning to return were aged over 60 (64%).

The average age among all participants was found to be 42 years, with women averaging 41 years and men 56 years.

### MARITAL STATUS

The analysis of the survey participants’ marital status revealed a diverse range of relationship statuses. In total, over 62 per cent of the surveyed nationals identified as married, while 18 per cent of them reported to be single. Additionally, 9 per cent were widowed, six per cent indicated being in a partnership, and five per cent were divorced.

The highest proportion of men were married (76%), followed by those who were divorced (9%) and those who are widowed (6%). Among women, 61 per cent were married and 19 per cent were single. However, almost the same proportion (9%) mentioned that they were widowed, similar to their male counterparts.

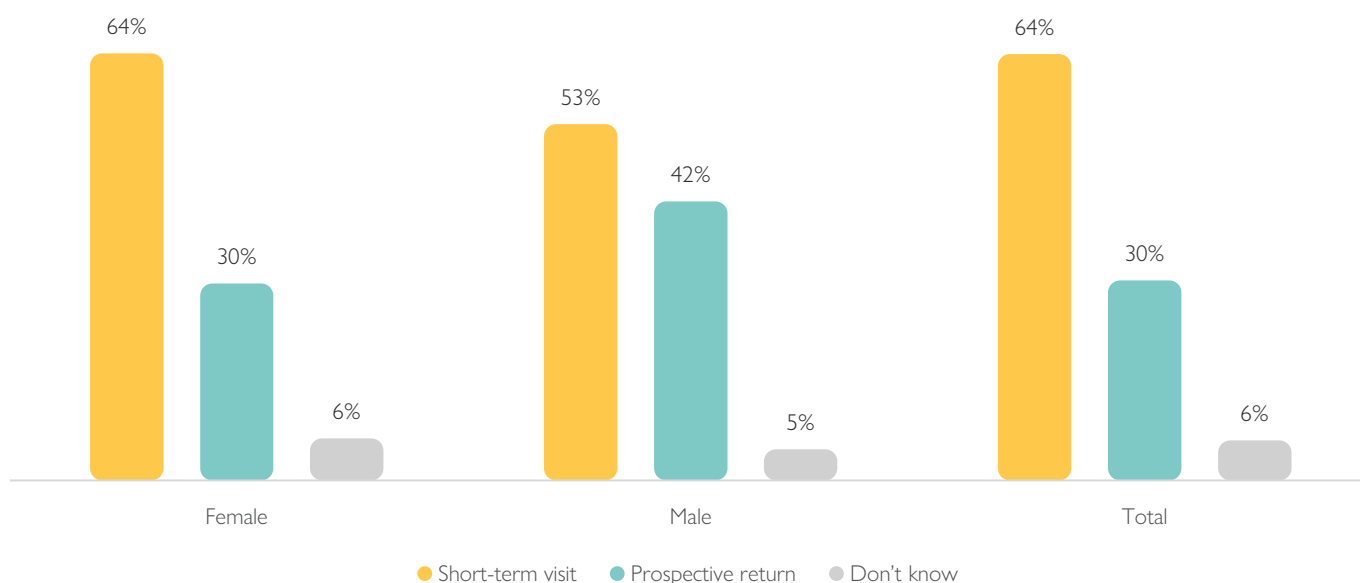
## INTENTIONS AND REASONS TO CROSS BACK TO UKRAINE

### SHORT VISIT OR PROSPECTIVE RETURN

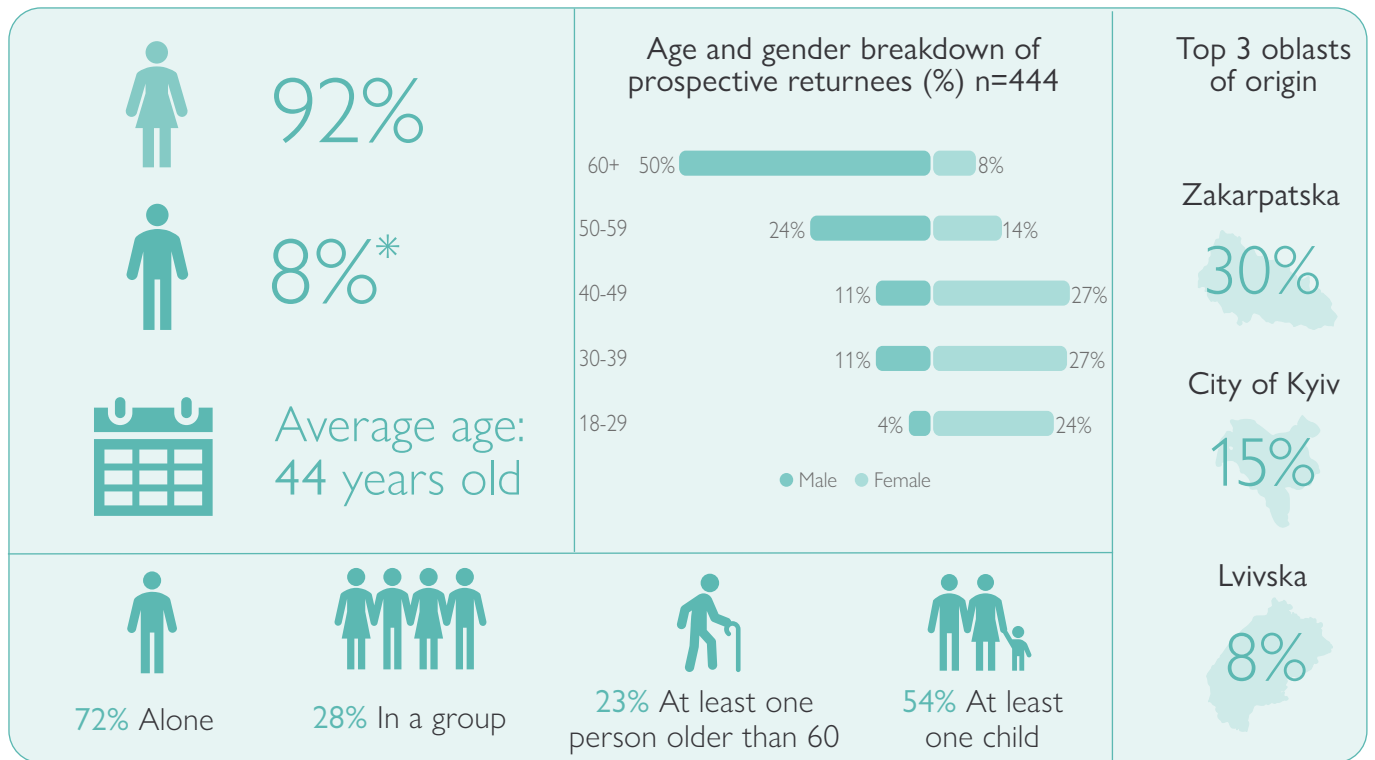
As mentioned, for the purpose of this analysis, “short-term visitors” are those who reported an intention to spend from 0 to 30 days in Ukraine, while respondents intending to stay in Ukraine more than one month are labelled as “prospective returnees”. Throughout the reporting period, 30 per cent of respondents expressed their intention to remain in Ukraine (prospective returnees), while 63 per cent planned to make a short visit (short-term visitors). The remaining 7 per cent were unsure of their return intentions.

The majority of respondents (86% overall) indicated their intention to stay in their own homes when returning. Six per cent reported their intention to stay at private accommodation (i.e hotel, private or civic initiatives), another six per cent plans to stay with relatives, while only 2 per cent stated intentions to stay with friends. One per cent mentioned that they don’t know where they will stay in Ukraine. Notably, a larger proportion of short-term visitors (20%) planned to stay with relatives compared to prospective returnees (3%).

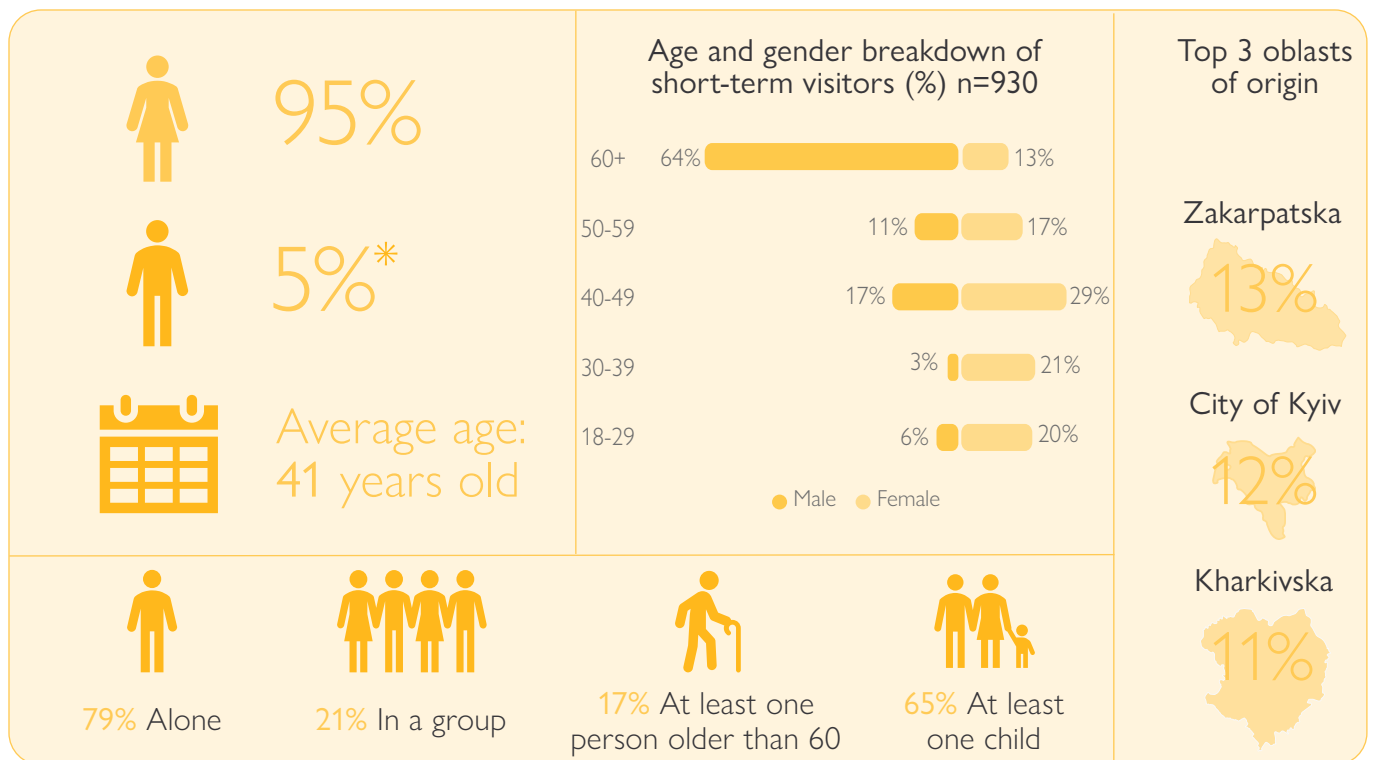
Figure 1. Intentions to stay in or visit Ukraine for a short period, by gender and total (%)



PROSPECTIVE RETURNEES (30% OF RESPONDENTS IN Q2 2024, N=444)



SHORT-TERM VISITORS (64% OF RESPONDENTS IN Q2 2024, N=930)



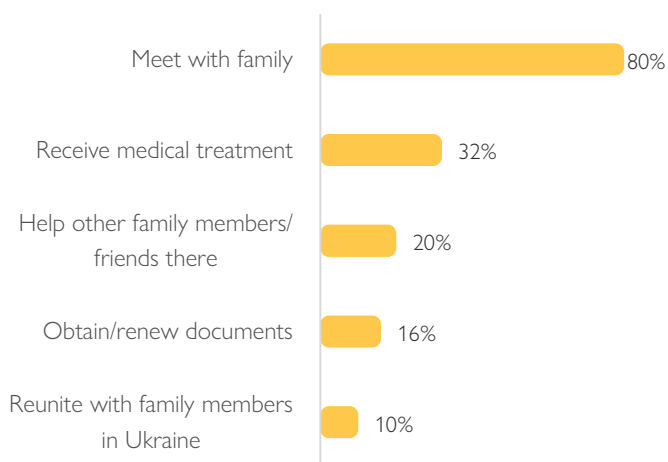
\* The small proportion of men crossing back into Ukraine compared to women is likely influenced by the legal restriction on men's ability to leave Ukraine if desired. With the declaration of Martial Law across the entire country in February 2022, the Ukrainian government prohibits able-bodied men of conscription age from leaving the country ([with some exceptions](#)).

## REASONS TO CROSS BACK TO UKRAINE

Among prospective returnees, almost three in four respondents (73%) had traveled outside Ukraine to visit relatives or close friends and intended to return. Fourteen per cent expressed a desire to meet with family members, and five per cent aimed to reunite with their family.

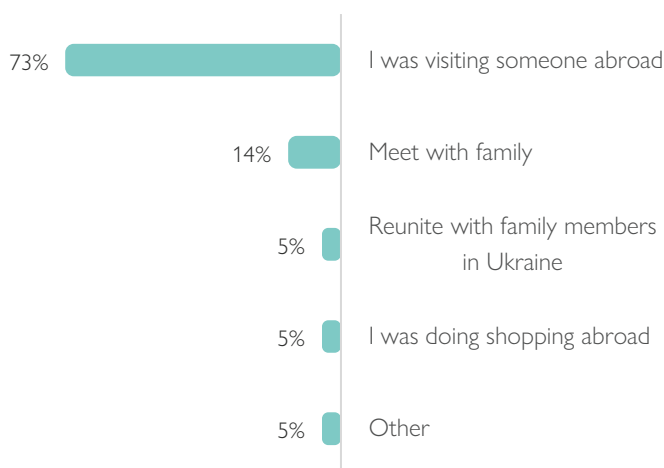
For short-term visitors, in 80 per cent of cases, they traveled to visit family members. Approximately 32 per cent sought

Figure 2. Top 5 reasons to do a short visit, short-term visitors (%) n=930



healthcare, including visits to doctors and specialists like pediatricians or dentists, while 20 per cent aimed to assist their family in Ukraine. Sixteen per cent of respondents needed to obtain or renew identity documents such as biometric passports, diplomas, or licenses upon their return to Ukraine, while ten per cent desired family reunification.

Figure 3. Top 5 reasons to stay in Ukraine, prospective returnees (%) n=444



## TIME OUTSIDE OF UKRAINE

### DISPLACEMENT ABROAD

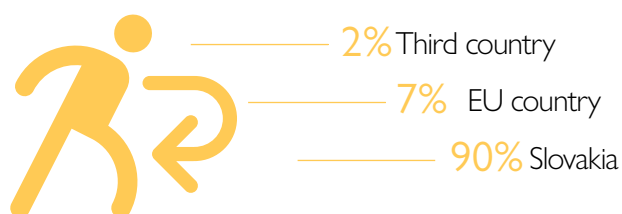
The primary cause of initial displacement was the war in Ukraine, accounting for more than a half of the respondents (57%). Short visits abroad were the second most common cause, contributing to 30 per cent of the displacements. Economic factors were mentioned by nearly a quarter of the respondents (23%). Education and limited access to essential services such as basic education, healthcare, water, food, and housing each were a cause for only 11 per cent of respondents. Notably, for a vast majority of prospective returnees (80%), the war was the root cause of their displacement.

Eighty-nine per cent of respondents returning to Ukraine had previously resided in Slovakia. Among the remaining respondents, 9 per cent had stayed in other European

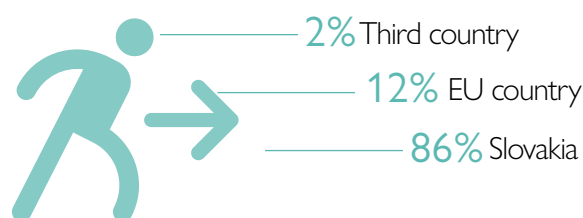
countries (n=126), with Austria (3%) and Czechia (2%) being the most common. Only two per cent had spent time outside of Europe, mostly in United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2%).

Among prospective returnees, the main countries of displacement were Austria (6%), Czechia (3%), and Germany (1%). Similarly, short-term visitors returning from displacement mainly came from Austria (2%), the United Kingdom (2%), Czechia (2%), Austria (7%), and Ireland (2%). Notably, prospective returnees were more likely to have spent their displacement period in Slovakia compared to short-term visitors (86% vs. 90%).

### SHORT-TERM VISITORS



### PROSPECTIVE RETURNEEES





## EXITS AND ENTRIES

The difference between the two groups is further emphasized by the reported frequency of border crossings. Most short-term visitors (90%) crossed the border more than twice since

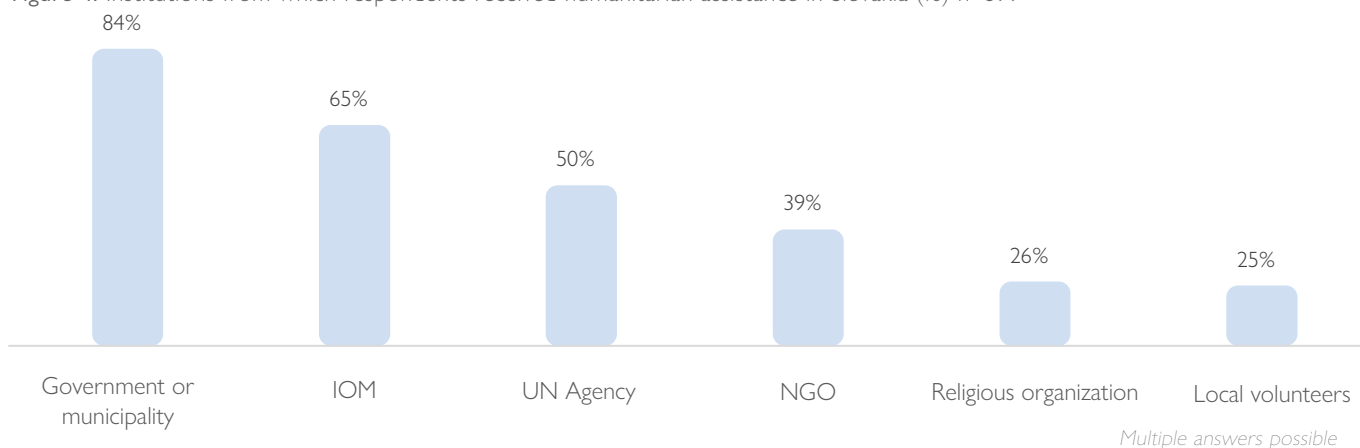
February 2022, when 83 per cent of prospective returnees crossed the border two times or fewer during the same period.

## ASSISTANCE RECEIVED

Less than half (48%) of respondents received humanitarian assistance while abroad. Prospective returnees reported receiving assistance at much lower rates (9%) compared to short-term visitors (67%). Only two per cent of Ukrainian respondents experienced difficulties receiving assistance. The organizations that provided assistance were local governments

(84%), IOM (65%), UN agencies (50%), NGO's (39%), religious organizations (26%) and volunteers (25%). Other, less mentioned, assistance providers were private individuals (2%) and only one per cent did not know to mention the source of assistance.

Figure 4. Institutions from which respondents received humanitarian assistance in Slovakia (%) n=699



## GROUP COMPOSITION

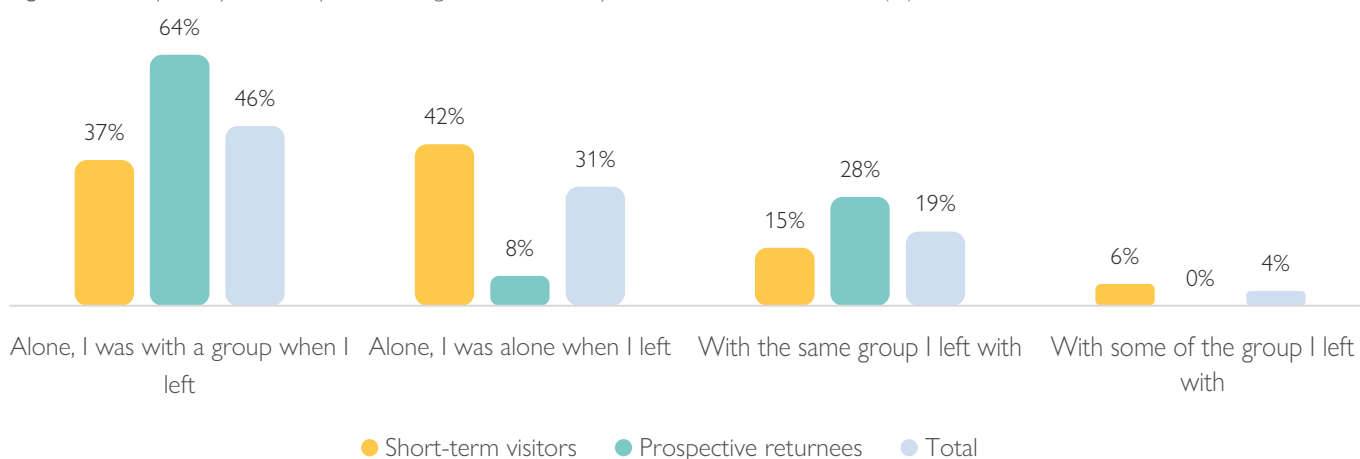
The majority of respondents (77%) were travelling back to Ukraine alone. Twenty-three per cent of survey respondents were crossing back to Ukraine as part of a group. Among these, most respondents were travelling with the same group (19% overall), while four per cent of respondents had some changes in their travel group.

per cent were traveling with a four-person group, and two per cent with a five- or six-person group.

More than a half (57%) of those who reported to be traveling in a group (n=341) were accompanied by one other person. Additionally, over one in three respondents (36%) reported traveling with a group composed of three people, while five

Of the 341 respondents that reported to be traveling with a group, 61 per cent of them were traveling with a group that included children (0 to 17 years old) and 18 per cent were traveling with a group that had at least one older person (60 years old or more). Mostly, respondents that were traveling with a group (n=341) were either traveling with their immediate family (89%) or with friends (10%).

Figure 5. Group composition upon crossing into Ukraine, by return intention and total (%) n=1,471



## REGION OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION

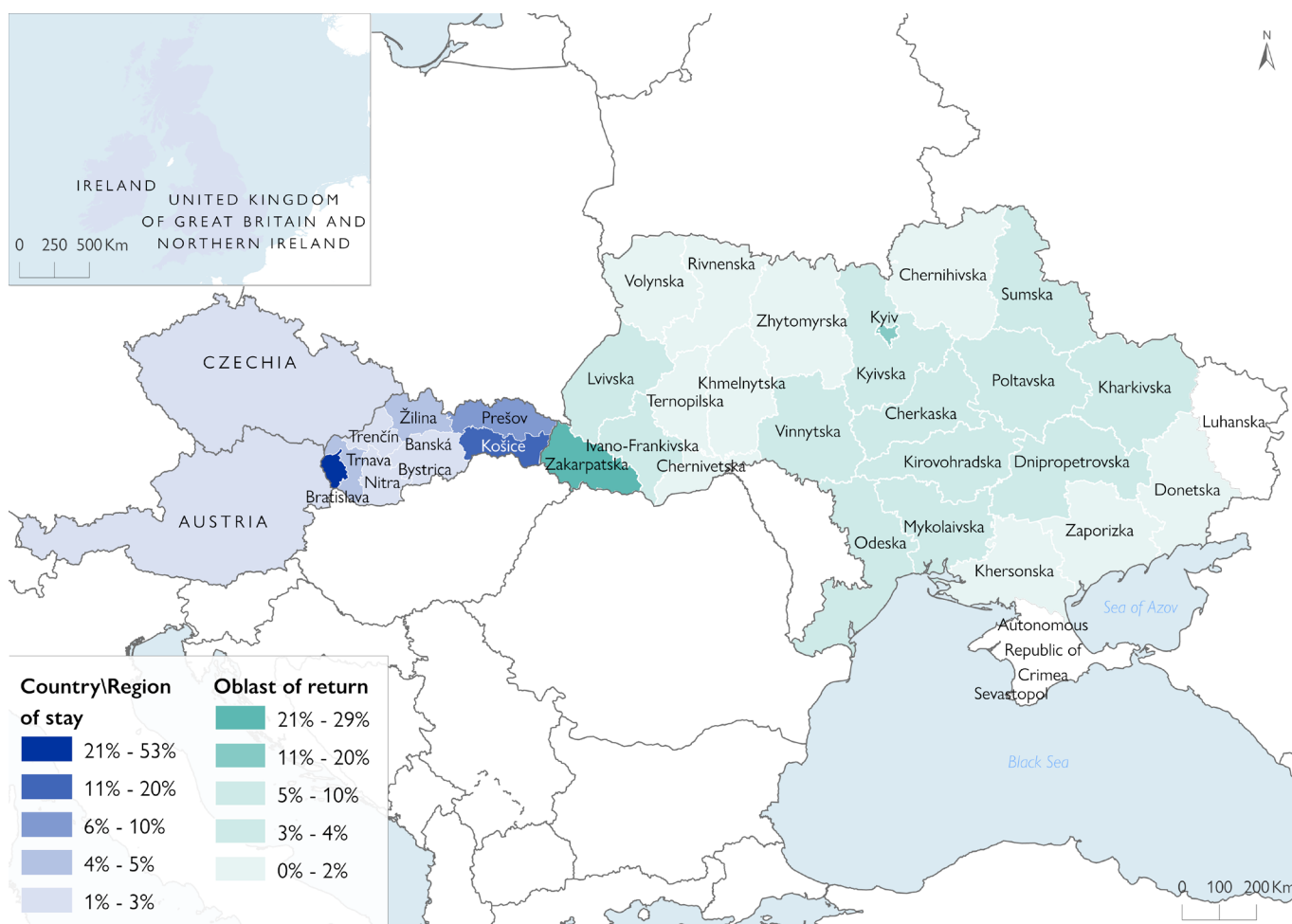
Nearly two-thirds of Ukrainian nationals come from seven main regions: Zakarpatska (19%), Kyiv (13%), Kharkivska (10%), Dnipropetrovska (8%), Odeska (5%), Lvivska (5%), and Ivano-Frankivska (4%). The remaining 37 per cent are from 20 other regions across Ukraine. Among those surveyed, 19 per cent of women and 20 per cent of men are from Zakarpatska, while 13 per cent of both women and men are from Kyiv. However, only 10 per cent of women are from Kharkivska, compared to 5 per cent of men. Most of the respondents were displaced from three main macroregions: West (34%), East (24%), and Kyiv (13%).

When asked about their intended destination, 85 per cent of

respondents indicated they wanted to return to their oblast of origin, while the remaining 15 per cent were traveling to a different oblast. Notably, a higher proportion of short-term visitors (20%) were heading to a different oblast compared to prospective returnees (5%).

The most frequently cited reasons for crossing back to a different region (n=219) were safety concerns (40%), displacement of family (31%), and damage to the place of origin (12%). Among respondents crossing to a different region, the top three destinations were Zakarpatska (63%), the city of Kyiv (19%) and Lvivska (5%).

MAP 1: COUNTRIES OF STAY & OBLAST OF DESTINATION IN UKRAINE, APRIL – JUNE 2024



This map is for illustration purposes only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM

## NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS UPON RETURN

### NEEDS

General information emerged as the overall primary need among those crossing back, reported by 21 per cent of respondents, which was then followed by the access to the health services (18%). Other frequent responses included medicines (14% each), long-term accommodation (6%) and financial support (6%). Overall, 50 per cent of respondents reported no needs. The analysis reveals distinct patterns in the needs expressed by short-term visitors and prospective returnees. Short-term visitors exhibited a higher prevalence of requirements for general information (27%) and health services (25%), medicines (20%), long-term accommodation (9%), and financial support (8%). Conversely, prospective returnees prioritised their needs differently, with the most common requests being power banks, generators, accumulators, goods for light (7%), general information (7%), health services (4%), financial support (4%) and medicines (3%).

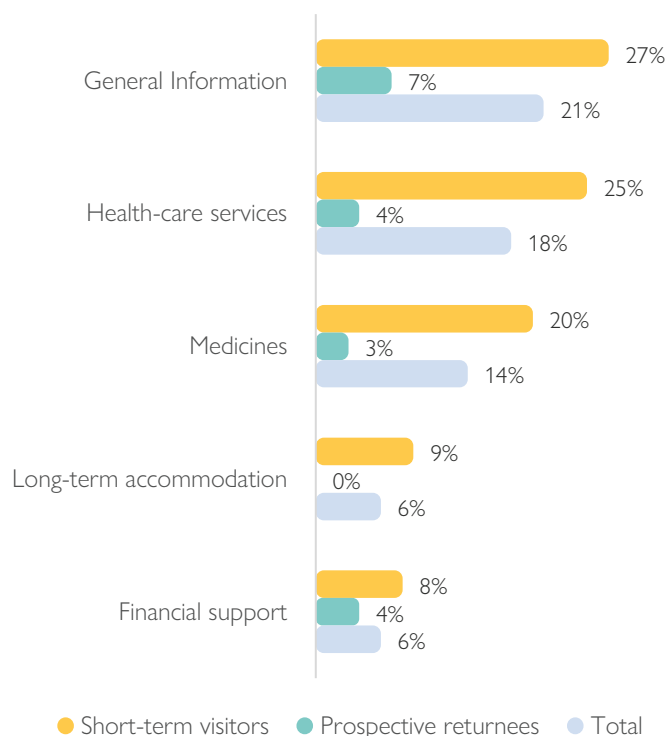
More than three quarter (78%) of prospective returnees indicated that they have no immediate needs and significantly lower proportion (37%) of short-term visitors reported the same. This can be linked to issues that short-term visitors aim to address during their visit in Ukraine. For example, financial support, health services, and medicines were reported more frequently among those who crossed back for a short visit.

### EXPECTATIONS

Ukrainian respondents were asked about their expectations regarding the accessibility of basic needs and services, as well as their ability to participate in public affairs upon returning to Ukraine.

A significant percentage of respondents expected easy access to basic services (83%), food (82%), identity and education documents (83%), and accommodation (87%) upon their return to Ukraine. Additionally, 76 per cent anticipated that participating in public affairs would be very easy. Covering basic expenses was expected to be very

Figure 6. Top 5 needs upon arrival to Ukraine, by return intention (%) n=1,467

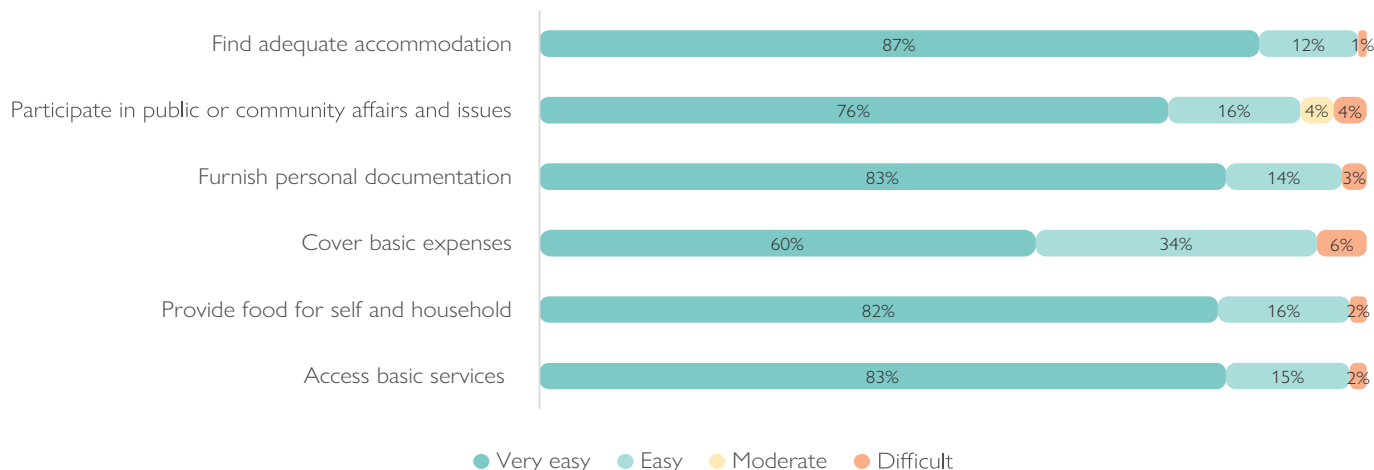


Multiple answers possible

easy for nearly 60 per cent of respondents, while 34 per cent thought it would be easy, and six per cent anticipated difficulty in meeting basic needs upon their arrival in Ukraine.

Regarding security, 28 per cent of respondents expected to always encounter security incidents due to the war, 23 per cent expected such incidents frequently, and 26 per cent anticipated them occasionally. Meanwhile, 21 per cent expected incidents to occur rarely, and only two per cent did not expect any incidents at all.

Figure 8. Expectations upon arrival to destination in Ukraine among prospective returnees (%) n=37

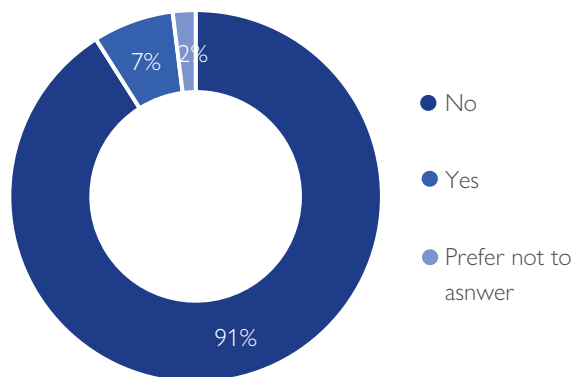


## UNEQUAL TREATMENT

In the period between April and June 2024, 7 per cent of respondents experienced unequal treatment based on nationality or ethnicity, since leaving their place of residence in Ukraine, either themselves or someone in their household. The majority of survey respondents (91%) did not inform such experiences, while the remaining 2 per cent preferred not to answer.

More than half of the discrimination cases involved hostility or aggression. Other common incidents included being refused rental accommodation, denied employment, children being bullied at school, or being refused service.

Figure 7. Experienced discrimination (%) n=1,467



IOM provides assistance and conducts a short survey with people fleeing war in Ukraine in Senec, Slovakia. © IOM 2024

## METHODOLOGY

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. It is designed to regularly and systematically capture, process and disseminate information to provide a better understanding of the movements and evolving needs of displaced populations, whether on site or en route.

Since March 2022, IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) has been regularly surveying individuals who are crossing back to Ukraine from neighbouring countries. The aim of the survey is to improve the understanding of their profiles, displacement patterns, intentions and needs. The survey is deployed in 5 countries neighbouring Ukraine – Hungary, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Slovakia. In Slovakia, surveys were conducted in Ukrainian, Russian, and English by IOM's DTM trained teams of enumerators on a mobile application. The interviews are anonymous and carried out one-on-one with respondents, provided they consent

to be interviewed after a brief introduction. Enumerators trained on ethics of data collection, information provision and protection principles, approached people crossing back to Ukraine, to verify their willingness to conduct the survey, which was only addressed to adults (18+).

Since July 2023, the survey section dedicated to intentions was adjusted to reflect more updated understanding of the dynamics of movements from and to Ukraine. A question on "length of stay in Ukraine" measured in number of days has been added ("forever" and "does not know" were also possible). For the purpose of this report short-term visitors are those who report the intention to remain in Ukraine for 30 days or less, while prospective returnees are those who report the intention to remain for more than 30 days or "forever" in Ukraine.

### ABOUT THE SURVEY

#### Aim

To improve the understanding of the profiles of refugees from Ukraine crossing back to Ukraine, including their displacement patterns, intentions and needs.

#### Target Population

Ukrainians who are crossing back to Ukraine.

#### Location and execution

Face-to-face surveys are conducted by 11 trained enumerators stationed at selected locations. Surveys were conducted in Ukrainian and Russian with the help of a mobile application.

#### Regional data collection and analysis

The survey was deployed in 5 countries neighbouring Ukraine – Hungary, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Slovakia.

### LIMITATIONS

In order to maximize the number of interviews, and reach out to different profiles of individuals, various locations for data collection were identified. While in border crossing/transit points, such as train stations, the flow of people was higher and interviewees were randomly surveyed (having the same likelihood compared to others to be selected), in other locations, such as collective accommodations and humanitarian aid centres, respondents were intentionally identified. Among the limitations encountered during data collection were

the reduced time to carry out surveys at transit points and limited number of enumerators to cover the desired locations/regions. To address the aforesaid shortcomings, and cover different viewpoints, a mixed sampling strategy guided the data collection exercise. Consequently, this analysis does not proportionally represent the whole population and results cannot be deemed representative of all refugees from Ukraine in Slovakia, and the results should be considered indicative.

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## DTM

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is a system to track and monitor displacement and population mobility. The survey form was designed to capture the main displacement patterns of refugees of any nationality fleeing from Ukraine because of the war. It captures the demographic profiles of respondents and of the group they are travelling with, if any; it asks about intentions relative to the intended destinations and prospects in the country of displacement; it gathers information regarding a set of main needs that the respondents expressed as more pressing at the moment of the interview.

Since the onset of the war in Ukraine, several IOM's DTM tools were deployed in countries neighbouring Ukraine and in other countries particularly impacted by the new arrivals of refugees from Ukraine.

For more information, please consult:  
<https://dtm.iom.int/responses/ukraine-response>